

Delaware Department of Health and Social Services
Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities

The Delaware Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities promotes and supports health programs, partners, and initiatives including the *You Can!* campaign as the Area Agency on Aging for Delaware. Recently, the Division has stepped up these efforts by urging Delaware's aging network to become *You Can!* partners and use the toolkit to promote and co-brand their healthy aging activities and events including on their Web site at www.dsappd.com.

The Division involves seniors through physical activity and nutrition activities as part of the Healthy for Life Initiative. Sample activities include the Healthy Nutrition, Color Your Way to 5-9 A Day; the Get Healthy for Life educational program; and the Walk Delaware and Delaware Senior Fitness Challenge.

Approximately 5,000 participants have participated in the Healthy Nutrition, Color Your Way to 5-9 A Day activity as part of health forums and outreach events. The activity is designed to increase daily fruit and vegetable consumption among older adults and to promote healthy dietary choices to help promote healthy aging. The Division offers a 10 week educational program to increase daily levels of physical activity and daily fruit and vegetable consumption.

Approximately 5,000 older Delawareans participate in the Walk Delaware and Delaware Senior Fitness Challenge. The idea is for participating older adults to walk (run, swim, or bike) the equivalent of the length (96 miles) and width (34 miles) of the Delaware in one year. Program can be adapted for active, sedentary and frail older adults and/or those with physical disabilities. Nearly all senior centers and selected adult day centers, assisted living and senior residential sites have participated or sponsored activities associated with this program.

Key elements that have made these activities successful include:

- Partnerships – especially lead partners
- Shared vision and consistent message
- Signature activities that support goals and objectives
- Targeted marketing
- Evaluations/Outcomes
- Communication with partners and aging network
- Advocacy

All of the above programs and strategies can be easily replicated. They are innovative in that they reflect the unique perspectives and interests of our lead partners and the senior populations targeted and served.

Through these activities the Division has learned that building appropriate and longstanding partnerships involves a shared vision along with a commitment of time and

resources from all parties involved. Ongoing support and funding for the program help sustain these collaborations.

The Division shares recognition as a You Can! Program Champion with their lead community-based partners. These partners include:

- Division of Public Health (offices of Diabetes Prevention & Control Program; Health Promotion & Disease Prevention; Minority Health
- Elder Nutrition Program, Home-Delivered Meals
- Delaware Senior Olympics
- Produce for Better Health Foundation
- University of Delaware - Div. of Health, Exercise & Nutrition Sciences
- Delaware Ecumenical Council on Children & Families
- Howard Weston Senior Center
- Wilmington Senior Center
- Newark Senior Center
- Janet Hughes & Associates
- Better Years Senior News Publication
- Delaware Ecumenical Council on Children and Families
- University of Delaware, Department of Health, Exercise & Nutrition Sciences
- Howard Weston Senior Center and Newark Senior Centers

Initially, the Division committed resources to the project and developed relationships with several lead community partners. Over the years, they planned, developed and implemented strategies and activities, assessed their progress and programs, and leveraged our resources. Many of the barriers encountered were overcome by finding common ground, providing linkages to federal and community resources, including partners in statewide health plans and initiatives, sharing technical expertise, training, resources and support as needed.

This organization has leveraged funding and staff resources to make this project a success. With one dedicated staff member and limited funding for health education and disease prevention for older Delawareans, the Division has been successful with its health outreach efforts due primarily to the in-kind resources provided by lead partners and community organizations including a corps of volunteers and interns from local universities/colleges, technical expertise, and help with media and marketing